

FINA Convention Day 3: President Maglione “The ability to swim is a vital skill”

FINA Communications Department

Updates about the Swimming for All – Swimming for Life programme kicked-off the last day of the [5th FINA World Aquatics Convention](#) [1] in Hangzhou, China.

As a reminder, this initiative launched by FINA President Dr. Julio C. Maglione in 2014 aims at offering the possibility to offer to individuals from all ages, backgrounds and capacities to take swimming lessons. The main objective is to spread mass teaching of swimming, a life-saving skill in most countries of the world, with standard criteria across all countries to promote physical activity but also contribute to the prevention of drowning and thus save lives.

President Maglione was accompanied on stage by FINA 2nd Vice President Sam Ramsamy, FINA Coaches Committee Chairman Graham Hill, CIGEPS-UNESCO Adviser Arnaldo Fuxa, UNESCO Beijing Specialist Frederick Russell-Riovallan and WHO CEO Justin Scarr.

Maglione gave an update about his initiative.

“As you may know, according to the World Health Organisation global report on drowning of November 2014, there are an estimated 372 000 annual drowning deaths worldwide (more than a 1000 per day). Children, males and individuals with increased access to water are most at risk of drowning. Low- and middle-income countries account for 91% of unintentional drowning deaths. As the world governing body for aquatics, FINA could not remain insensitive to these alarming rates. Therefore, we decided to make our contribution by creating the Swimming for All – Swimming for Life programme.

“Within the scope of this project, FINA offers its organisational capacity and convening power, its best leaders, technical officials and sportspeople, to make the Swimming for All – Swimming for Life a reality and contribute fully to making the world a healthier place.



“The fundamental objective is to ensure that everyone has the chance to learn to swim. This is the reason why it is important to develop learn-to-swim programmes in as many places as possible. We will continue to enhance and expand these efforts, as well as contribute to the promotion of swimming throughout the world.

“Promoting swimming in the 21st century not only means producing high quality events and records but also achieving the type of access for all people for appropriate practices for a healthy lifestyle, and most importantly preventing drowning and thus saving lives.

“Focusing now on the subject that brings us together today, may we remember that swimming is an important tool to stay healthy and improve global health. In November 2015, UNESCO approved the revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, stating: ‘Physical education, physical activity and sport can play a significant role in the development of participant’s physical literacy, well-being, health and capability by improving endurance, strength, flexibility, coordination, balance and control. The ability to swim is a vital skill for every person exposed to risks of drowning.’”

“Since it was formed, the FINA Swimming for All – Swimming for Life Committee has held various meetings of its members and gathered together educational materials relating to swimming teaching, produced in different countries. We have also presented the programme and its general guidelines at various international forums.

“UN and CIGEPS-UNESCO officials were present and actively involved on those occasions and gave the programme, which they regarded as unique, a favourable reception.

“And although this programme is principally designed for and aimed at countries with fewer resources, where the development of swimming is hampered by economic and/or social factors, it is important to involve all of our 209 member federations, since those which are most developed can assist those with the greatest needs with their knowledge and experience.

“It is important to emphasise that our aim with this programme is not only to spread mass teaching of the fundamental techniques of swimming and life-saving in the water, but also, and to the same extent, to contribute to the integration, education and inclusion of citizens in the

places where it is applied. And, of course, to make our sport even more popular and participative and to promote FINA's positive image.

“To update you on our newest initiatives on this matter, I would like to highlight the very positive outcome of the Working Group Meeting last October in Lausanne, where many important items were discussed, namely: the teachers' formal qualification, the child protection policy, the learn-to-swim programmes, the water safety procedures, and the monitoring and evaluation criteria to assess on the effectiveness of this project.

“As a result of that meeting, a “Reference Manual on Teaching and Technical Improvement” was created, based on the positive experience of our friends from the Portuguese Swimming Federation. This document provides the keys to implement “learn-to-swim” programmes around the world, something that we will also discuss here during this morning's session.



Frederick Russell-Rivoallan, who is based in Beijing, went over the work UNESCO is doing in the field of drowning prevention.

“You might be wondering why I am here today. Well I am here in my capacity of swimmer. I grew up in Toronto where we were lucky enough to have accessible swimming facilities and instructors but of course not everyone has this chance. At UNESCO we intervene, when asked to, and support States that need expertise to design a programme in the field of sport. We advocate for the inclusion of sport in the communities. We support the untiring work of President Maglione because swimming is a life-saving skill and it is the only sport that is included in the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education.”

Justin Scarr continued: “At WHO we have a more social impact approach to swimming. It is a public healthy driven issue, whereas FINA as an aquatics perspective. We are putting in place safety instructions and reinforcing the regulations for life saving practice and equipment that prevent drowning. We have developed the WHO Drowning Prevention Publication which is based on three interventions areas: safe places, teach and train. This manual can be useful to any States looking at developing programmes.”

The last interventions of the 5th FINA World Aquatics Convention 2018 were followed by an animated round table with the above participants.

Zhejiang Provincial Sports Bureau Director Zheng Yao together with President Maglione closed the 5th FINA World Aquatics Convention on December 10.



Maglione said:

“After three days of intense networking and exchange of ideas, this very successful FINA World Aquatics Convention comes to an end here in Hangzhou, China. I believe the discussions and the brilliant presentations from our lecturers will benefit and bring added-value to our activities. From the feedback received in past editions, the positive consequences of the Convention are felt on national level and our members greatly appreciate this opportunity to learn and get inspired. I believe the theme of this 2018 edition – “Embracing Innovation – Aquatics in a global world” – was well respected during this Convention.



“Our Chinese hosts did a superb job here in Hangzhou and everything was very well organised. The entire FINA family expresses its gratitude to the national authorities, city of Hangzhou and China Swimming Association for their support and kind hospitality. Thank you also to all of you – delegates and lecturers – for having actively participated in this Convention. Your achievements and commitment make FINA more important in the world of Sport.”

